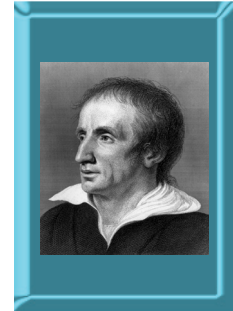


TO THE CUCKOO

William Wordsworth



Wordsworth, William (1770-1850), English poet, one of the most accomplished and influential of England's poets, whose style created a new tradition in poetry. Wordsworth was born on April 7, 1770, in Cockermouth, Cumberland, and educated at Saint John's College, University of Cambridge. He developed a keen love of nature as a youth, and during school vacation periods he frequently visited places noted for their scenic beauty. After receiving his degree in 1791 he returned to France, where he became an enthusiastic convert to the ideals of the French Revolution (1789-1799). Although Wordsworth had begun to write poetry while still a schoolboy, none of his poems was published until 1793. He is popularly known as the poet of nature. He wrote poems portraying nature as something divine and spiritual.



The poet is thrilled by the voice of the Cuckoo. He describes some of his childhood experiences when as a school boy he would rove through the woods.

O Blithe New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! Shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of Sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my schoolboy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

Glossary

babble 'bæbl	to talk or say something in a quick, confused, excited way.
beget bi'get	to cause something to happen.
blithe blaið	cheerful and carefree.
long (v) lɒŋ	to want something very much.
mystery 'mɪs.tər.i	something strange or unknown which has not yet been explained.
rove rəʊv	to move, travel or look around especially a large area.
wander 'wɒndər	to move from place to place, either without a purpose or destination.

Understanding the Poem

1. How does the cuckoo's voice charm the poet?
2. Why does the poet call cuckoo 'wandering voice' 'darling of the spring'?
3. Which childhood experiences does the poet describe in stanzas five and six?
4. What does 'golden time' refer to?

Learning about the literary devices

1. Who is personified in the poem?
2. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?
3. What imagery does Wordsworth use to portray the Beauty of nature in the poem?

Discussion

1. Have you ever heard a cuckoo sing? How did you feel about it?
2. Discuss the importance of music in our day to day life?

Suggested Reading

Daffodils by Wordsworth.

Ode to Skylark by P.B. Shelley.

Quote to remember

There are only two powers on the earth — one is silence, the other sound.

Sri Aurobindo